

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 28, 1998 COMMISSION MEETING OF  
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

The meeting was called to order at 9:36 a.m. by Chairman Carozza with the following members present: Commissioners Andresen, Chatfield, Haber, Milewski, Mullen Munkenbeck, Peabody and Vendetta. Commissioners Gomeau, Johnson, Kowalski, McCarthy and Nicol were excused. Staff members Morrissette, Ouellette, Piechota and Piskura were present.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Peabody and SECONDED by Commissioner Andresen to approve the minutes of the March 31, 1998 meeting. Motion carried.*

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Peabody and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck to approve the Staff Report for the period of March 15, 1998 - April 14, 1998. Motion carried.*

Moving to item 4 a.) Staffing Update, Mr. Morrissette stated that the new Director of Training Adam Piskura has begun work. He is in his third week and in that short time he has already created a long laundry list of items both administrative and facility related that he would like to bring forth for consideration of change. Mr. Morrissette asked Adam Piskura to address the Commission.

Chairman Carozza stated that on behalf of the Commission he would like to officially welcome Adam Piskura as a member of the staff and added that he was sure together we'll bring this Academy forward.

Mr. Piskura stated that he appreciated the Commission's confidence and support and pledged that he would not let the Commission down. He indicated that it's been a very active first three weeks for any type of position and that he thinks he spent all of about four days in the office here in the building. The rest of the time he has been out and around the state as well as out of state and it's been very enlightening. There's some exciting things happening both nationally and within the New England region that we need to be not only part of but a large part of and we are. Connecticut Fire Academy has the ability and the resources to become a shining star not just here in Connecticut. When thinking of fire service training often what comes to mind is Texas A&M or MFRI. He stated that his goal is to make people start thinking of Connecticut Fire Academy when they think of quality training.

Moving to item 4 b.) Mr. Morrissette gave a budget update. The state budget has not yet been approved. In speaking with our Budget Analyst as late as last evening, she indicated that she was not aware of any changes. As reported in previous meeting and/or staff reports one funding issue remains unresolved and that is for developing a training program on the use of thermal imaging cameras. Originally this budget item started off at about \$130,000 and then it was brought down to about \$30,000 although now it does not appear anywhere in the budget. In speaking with Rep. Knopp who made the proposal, he

indicated that this item was still in the budget. Mr. Morrisette stated that he was told that there is about six million dollars for various programs still in limbo. Our Budget Analyst indicated if we do not receive money for this program, OPM would be open to further discussions on the issue.

Commissioner Peabody inquired about the pass through of money for the construction of a firefighter memorial.

Mr. Morrisette stated that Rep. Stillman and Senator Crisco indicated that it was their hope that the money should be held until this project can move forward. The legislators also indicated that come the next legislative session if there was need for additional funds not to be afraid to come back. He added that it's very important that the representatives of the Firefighters' Association on the Commission reinforce to the firefighter memorial committee to get moving.

Commissioner Peabody stated he agrees 100% and the Commission needs to make it known to the Firefighters' Association up front and now that the Commission is obligated to hold that money until it is time to construct the memorial as opposed to just donating it.

Moving to item 4 c.) Mr. Morrisette reported on the status of the pending legislation. This has been an easy year in terms of quantity of proposed legislation to monitor.

- The Bill regarding the promulgation of regulations by the Commission was passed by the House and is now on the Senate calendar.
- The Training Bill #444 passed the Senate and was placed on the foot of the House calendar and appears as it is going to die. This more or less was a conscious decision because it did not incorporate the funding language portion of the package.
- Lastly, a Bill proposed by the CT Fire Department Instructors' Association regarding final stage manufacturers. There was some concern that caused it to be sent to a committee. After an inquiry late yesterday it was learned that it was tabled for the House calendar again.

Moving to item 4 d.) Mr. Morrisette reported on the status of the 1-800-Fire Line project. He indicated he had approached three individuals to coordinate this project and was turned down by all. The Administrator stated that he would move forward with this project by utilizing some of Andy Ouellette's part-time availability. Within the next few weeks the agency expects to get an initial mailing out to fire departments. In a phone survey conducted of about seven states that have implemented the program it was discovered that most of them put the phone line in operation and then began the education effort. Some of the programs did hold a kick off press conferences or ceremony while others have either not had anything or they intend to wait three to six months prior to doing anything. All the states surveyed felt very positive in terms of this program's success although none could share any data or statistics. Several local elected officials have called to inquire about the program and a couple of communities have come forward to serve as pilot communities to move this project along.

Moving to item 4 e.) Mr. Morrisette gave an update on the ARFF Prop Project. He reported about a meeting between DOT and the FAA here at the Academy intended to look at the current airplane prop. DOT had a waiver for about two years to continue training and that waiver has expired because the facility does not meet FAA training requirements. DOT felt that with some enhancements the FAA might approve the prop for training every other year but would still require that the personnel be trained in a facility that meets the FAA requirements during the off year. After speaking to Bob Juliano about a letter of intent to be sent to the FAA he seemed very supportive and indicated he would be very willing now to send a letter. Chief Duffy stated that some statements were made by the FAA reps that there is discretionary funding available. It appears that enhancements of the small prop

here may be the direction to go, from a more fiscally responsible direction. Bob Juliano indicated that either way a letter of intent should be sent. He indicated that he would like the Fire Chief and the State Fire Administrator to draft the letter and send it to him for review.

Mr. Piskura stated that while attending a Trade Region I meeting in Maine recently he had the opportunity to speak with Rick Masson, Training Director from New Hampshire. Mr. Masson indicated that the State of New Hampshire does not have land yet to build a prop on. They are looking at acquiring five acres to put this prop adjacent to their facility in Concord. At this point in time New Hampshire is no further ahead than the State of Connecticut.

Mr. Morrisette recommended that DOT and the Commission go ahead with a joint letter of intent. As more information is learned from the FAA reps who visited the Academy we may have a better indication of which direction to go.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Milewski and SECONDED by Commissioner Vendetta authorizing the State Fire Administrator to go forward with a joint letter of intent on the ARFF Prop project. Motion carried.*

Moving to item 5 a.) Mr. Morrisette spoke about the need for the Commissioners in concert with the Division Directors to engage in long range planning. About four years ago, a strategic plan was developed and the agency is probably now very close to meeting most of the goals and objectives that were identified in the original report. The Administrator and the Directors would like to plan an Agency Strategic Planning Session for the fall. He asked the Commissioners if there was interest to participate in a formal planning session which may entail more than one day.

A short discussion period followed with Commissioners expressing interest in holding a planning session for the fall of this year.

Moving to item 5 b.) Mr. Morrisette reported on the issue of Chief Officer Liability as it relates to the Somers incident. This matter has received a lot of press lately in North Central Connecticut with the Fire Chief facing civil action and a question of whether or not the town will support him as the case moves forward.

Mr. Morrisette stated that he had contacted Senators Kissel and Fleming to offer the Commission's support and our willingness to work with them. Surprisingly enough the Administrator said he has not received a lot of calls of concern from Fire Chiefs. However, in talking to some Insurance reps who have many volunteer fire service clients there's no question that this issue is on a lot of chief officers' minds. Commissioner Peabody shared with the Administrator a local ordinance that he had developed in Waterford which clearly identified some of the protections afforded for the officers representing the department. Within the Training Division there has been some discussion and desire to provide a seminar on the legal aspects of being a chief officer.

Commissioner Chatfield stated the focus should not just be on chief officer because sometimes in a small volunteer department it may end up to be the senior firefighter or the person in command who is first on the scene.

Commissioner Vendetta stated that unfortunately Commissioner Kowalski is not here today to report about meetings he's had with insurance companies who specifically deal with this type of protection.

Commissioner Munkenbeck stated that this has been a big issue with the New York State Fire Chiefs. There are several training packages they've worked on and a book they can distribute to their members on this very same subject.

Secretary Haber read a letter from the CT Fire Department Instructors Association requesting the assistance of the Commission for the CFDIA, 13th Annual Fire Apparatus Drivers' Rodeo to be held on May 31, 1998 at Corporate Ridge in Rocky Hill.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Chatfield and SECONDED by Commissioner Peabody authorizing the Commission to give support to the 13th Annual Fire Apparatus Rodeo. Motion carried.*

Secretary Haber read a letter from the CT Fire Prevention Poster Committee thanking the Commission for the use of the Children's Escape Trailer at their Fire Prevention Poster Awards luncheon on March 26, 1998.

Commissioner Chatfield thanked the State Fire Marshal's Office for their assistance recently on the occasion of the accidental death of a young man who was killed in Prospect. The youngster was a winner of the Fire Prevention poster contest in their county.

Commissioner Munkenbeck reported on the success of the recent CT Fire Officer weekend at the National Fire Academy.

Commissioner Munkenbeck stated that the Safety Institute Retention/Recruitment Project is well underway. Returns on the survey mailed out have been overwhelming. The next meeting is scheduled for May 5, 1:00 p.m. at Avon Fire Headquarters.

Commissioner Chatfield spoke about a meeting in Prospect for the New Haven County Chiefs' Emergency Plan where Commissioner Nicol reported on the distribution of funding for training for responding to national disasters. Commissioner Chatfield inquired if this was a matter the Commission should be concerned about.

Mr. Morrisette replied that there was a couple different issues as far as the health and welfare of the National Fire Academy and asked Mr. Piskura to elaborate on this subject.

Mr. Piskura stated that there is a tremendous amount of concern at the National Fire Academy regarding the publication of the white paper which identified the decreased funding and staffing at the National Fire Academy. To date three papers have been published, a white paper, a brown paper and a yellow paper. The brown paper is Carrie Brown's (U.S. Fire Administrator's) response to the white paper and the yellow paper is the IAFF's response. They have James Lee Witt's (Director of FEMA) attention at this point and what he did like any good Administrator would do is impanel a committee to insulate himself from the problem. There is references now to a blue ribbon committee. The problem with the blue ribbon committee is that nobody knows whose on it, and that's where if you choose and would like to exert some political action to insure that the Fire Service community is represented on that committee. There is a California Trade Region that is politically active with their Congress people to make sure that someone from their region is represented. The staff at the NFA shared with Mr. Piskura a key contact list which is a typical grouping list of who they normally invite to participate in these types of events, but that's not necessarily who James Witt would choose to invite.

Commissioner Peabody stated that the CT Building Officials of the Fire Marshal Association has an event scheduled on the same date as the next scheduled Commission meeting which could cause a lack of quorum. He asked if the Commission would want to consider an alternate date.

Chairman Carozza stated that there was some discussion prior to today's meeting of holding an evening meeting or selecting an alternate date.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Chatfield and SECONDED by Commissioner Peabody to leave it to the discretion of the Chair to select the date for the next meeting. Motion carried.*

Commissioner Vendetta spoke about a bill in the Senate regarding back flow preventer valves on sprinkler systems. He asked all Commissioners to contact their Senators as soon as possible asking them to support this bill.

Mr. Morrissette directed the attention of the Commissioners to some correspondence distributed before the meeting as follows:

- A letter from the National Association of State Fire Marshals regarding a vacancy of a U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commissioner. Commissioner Peabody has asked us to disseminate this information and to advocate that a person with fire service experience fill this vacancy.
- In addition, you were also given information on two grants which will be available. The first from Connecticut SAFE KIDS and the second from the Department of Public Health on a Smoke Alarm Intervention Program. It would be appreciated if Commissioners would pass out this information at their organization meeting.

Mr. Morrissette reported that last week he received a letter from a Deputy Chief from the West Hartford Fire Department recognizing Part-time Instructor Kyle Zimmer for his life saving efforts at an accident by pulling out the occupants prior to the vehicles becoming engulfed. He asked if the Commissioners wanted to take any action on this matter.

Chairman Carozza asked that Carl Zimmer be invited to the next Commission meeting so that the Commission can present him a certificate of appreciation.

Mr. Morrissette gave an update on an ongoing issue regarding a volunteer fire company (Hope Hose) in the City of Norwalk.

Mr. Morrissette invited Commissioners following the meeting to take a moment to visit the CL&P electrical safety props and the Sprinkler Lab.

Chairman Carozza reminded Commissioners about the importance of their attendance at the Commission meetings.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Chatfield and SECONDED by Commissioner Andresen to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.*

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 10:32 a.m.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

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Secretary, Commission on Fire  
Prevention and Control

## MOTIONS

Commission Meeting - April 28, 1998

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## STAFF FOLLOW-UP REQUIRED

**Firefighter Memorial** - Commissioner Peabody inquired about the pass through of money for the construction of a firefighter memorial.

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**ARFF Prop Project** - Mr. Morrissette recommended that DOT and the Commission go ahead with a joint letter of intent. As more information is learned from the FAA reps who visited the Academy we may have a better indication of which direction to go.

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**Long Range Planning** - Moving to item 5 a.) Mr. Morrissette spoke about the need for the Commissioners in concert with the Division Directors to engage in long range planning. About four years ago, a strategic plan was developed and the agency is probably now very

close to meeting most of the goals and objectives that were identified in the original report. The Administrator and the Directors would like to plan an Agency Strategic Planning Session for the fall. He asked the Commissioners if there was interest to participate in a formal planning session which may entail more than one day.

A short discussion period followed with Commissioners expressing interest in holding a planning session for the fall of this year.

**Certificate of Appreciation** - Mr. Morrissette reported that last week he received a letter from a Deputy Chief from the West Hartford Fire Department recognizing Part-time Instructor Kyle Zimmer for his life saving efforts at an accident by pulling out the occupants prior to the vehicles becoming engulfed. He asked if the Commissioners wanted to take any action on this matter.

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